

The Outhouse

By LaDrue Dorton

Our outhouse was between the porch and the granary—where the chicken coops were. And it was probably about four feet square and it was a one holer.

What would happen was that they would just dig a pit in the ground and then erect a structure over. They usually had a door that you could latch and keep people from intruding on you. I can remember Montgomery Ward catalogues were a great thing and what we used for toilet paper. Well, that's about all I can remember about that one.

The next outhouse that I remember was at my house that I had bought from my Grandfather. And I bought it as a WPA project. And it was a little more sophisticated. It had a cement floor and the wood was smoother and probably planed and sanded down.

It was not the first one with smooth wood. No, it was just the rough lumber. Grandfather Dorton's house was a red brick dwelling with four rooms on the ground floor: a kitchen, living room, bedroom, and parlor. There was also a front porch under the roof and a screened porch attached to the rear of the house. There were three bedrooms on the second floor. We referred to

them as the east, west, and south bedrooms. I suppose because the windows faced in that direction.

Access to the upstairs was an enclosed stairway entered from the living room. The house had no inside plumbing when I first lived there, except for a cold water tap and sink in the kitchen. When I was about nine or ten, (which would make it about 1925 and I was about 10 years old) the house was plumbed to install a bathroom in one corner of the first floor bedroom, which was a large room where my grandparents slept.

The hot water was provided by a water jacket in the firebox of the kitchen range. The water jacket was connected to an upright storage tank with a capacity of about thirty gallons, which stood at the end of the kitchen range. A hot water tap was also installed at the kitchen sink, which made my dish washing chores much easier.

The house was heated by two coal burning space heaters, in addition to the kitchen range. That's when we got plumbing ... about 1925 or thereabouts.